U.S. Officials Study Secret Data in Book By Ex-F.B.I. Agent

WASHINGTON, Oct. 27 (AP)—A former agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation who worked for the bureau during some of the cold war's biggest spy investigations wants to write a book about them. The Government, however, cannot decide if the book would harm national security.

Robert J. Lamphere, now an insurance executive in Boston, submitted a draft of part of the book to the F.B.I. last February and was told it involved classified information.

He appealed to the Justice Department, and the battle within the Government's intelligence bureaucracy is still on.

"My position in the appeal was, 'The K.G.B. has known this for 27 years, so where's the secret?'" Mr. Lamphere said yesterday. "But I don't want to hurt my Government."

The K.G.B. is the Soviet secret police and intelligence agency.

He Won't Discuss Contents

Mr. Lamphere would not talk about the contents of his book, entitled "The FBI vs. the KGB—the Unseen War." The chapter under review, however, is known to involve breaking a Soviet code more than 30 years ago, an accomplishment already alluded to in a number of books about spy investigation cases.

The Justice Department reportedly has cleared the draft chapter, but the National Security Agency has balked, contending portions contain national secrets.

The matter has been referred to the Interagency Classification Review Committee, which was to hear arguments this week on whether it should consider the case.

Mr. Lamphere, 59 years old, was with the bureau from 1941 to 1955, the last seven years as a counterintelligence specialist.

During those years the agency investigated such cases as Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, who were executed in 1953 for passing secrets to the Soviet Union, and Judith Coplon, a one-time Justice Department analyst tried on espionage charges in 1949.

Mr. Lamphere, now a senior vice president for the John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company in Boston, said he decided to write a book after he was angered by a television documentary account of the Rosenberg case. He wrote the draft chapter being studied by the Government over a single weekend.